

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 DRC-01 /056 W
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R 161045Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7661

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16547

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,HH, VN

SUBJECT: NORTH VIETNAM REPORTEDLY OFFERS CULTURAL EXCHANGES WITH
THAILAND

REF: A) FBIS D160246Z OCT 74; B) FBIS D160936Z OCT 74

1. BOTH "THE NATION" AND THE "BANGKOK POST" OF OCT. 16
HEADLINED STORIES THAT NORTH VIETNAM HAS OFFERED TO
LAUNCH A CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH THAILAND (REF A).
THE MESSAGE WAS REPORTEDLY CARRIED BY PHANSAK WINYARAT,
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR OF THE "SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW", WHO
WAS GRANTED A VISA FOR A 3-WEEK VISIT TO THE DRV IN LATE
SEPTEMBER. PHANSAK QUOTES VU QUOC UY, DIRECTOR OF THE
DRV COMMISSION FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES,
AS SAYING: "THERE IS NO PROBLEM IN PRINCIPAL, ABOUT AN
EXCHANGE OF JOURNALISTS AND ARTISTS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES
AS LONG AS THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IS GOOD." "THE NATION"
QUOTED DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN AS CON-
FIRMING THAT HANOI HAS EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO EXCHANGE
CULTURAL DELEGATIONS AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD ESTABLISHING
A POLITICAL DIALOGUE.

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2. PHIRAT ITSARASENA, CHIEF OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN

AFFAIRS PRESS DIVISION, ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO NEWSMEN OCT.16: "WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE DRV AND THAILAND. NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE THROUGH PROPER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION. WE SINCERELY HOPE THIS WILL BE THE BEGINNING OF AN ERA OF PEACE AND COOPERATION FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES AND FOR THE REGION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AS A WHOLE." (REF B).

3. IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS, PHYRAT SAID THAT THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WOULD BE THE THAI AND DRV EMBASSIES IN (UNSPECIFIED) THIRD COUNTRIES. HE INDICATED THAT THE STORIES IN THE "POST", "THE NATION" AND "PRACHATIPATAI" ALL CAME FROM THE SAME SOURCE, AND THAT CHATCHAI HAD COMMUNICATED WHAT PHANSAK SAID TO THE CABINET AT A MEETING OCTOBER 15.

4. AN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER OCT. 16 THAT PHANSAK APPARENTLY CONTACTED THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ON HIS OWN AND COMMUNICATED THE REPORTED MESSAGE DIRECTLY TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OR THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER. HE SPECULATED THAT THE DRV WOULD BACK AWAY FROM THE OVERTURE, IF THERE ACTUALLY WAS ONE, NOW THAT IT HAD APPEARED IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

5. COMMENT: THE RTG STATEMENT ON THE REPORTED OVERTURE IS YET ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY RTG OFFICIALS TO EXPAND CONTACTS WITH THE DRV. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS EFFORT WILL HAVE ANY MORE SUCCESS THAN PREVIOUS RTG INITIATIVES TOWARD THE DRV.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), CULTURAL EXCHANGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BANGKO16547
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740295-0067
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741043/aaaabksg.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) FBIS D160246Z OCT 74; B) FBIS D16, 0936Z OCT 74
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 JUL 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTH VIETNAM REPORTEDLY OFFERS CULTURAL EXCHANGES WITH THAILAND
TAGS: PFOR, TH, VN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005